DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 181 591 EA 012 397

AUTHOR Armstrong, Robert L.
TITLE The Writing of School Philosophy. Research and Services Bulletin No. 34.
INSTITUTION Arizona State Univ., Tempe. Bureau of Educational Research and Services.
PUB DATE Dec 73
NOTE 43p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Objectives; Beliefs; Committees; Educational Needs; *Educational Objectives; *Educational Philosophy; Guides; Teacher Participation

ABSTRACT

Intended to meet the needs of school faculties in writing the school philosophy and behavioral objectives, this guide proceeds step-by-step, defining and explaining each facet of the process. According to the document, a school philosophy must consider the scope and nature of the educative process, the characteristics and needs of students served, and the outcomes to be attained. The importance of behavioral objectives is stressed. The author recommends prefacing the philosophy with a position statement that states general beliefs about education. Then the heart of the document, the general educational objectives, must be written. The author explains how to select a group to write the philosophy and how this group ought to proceed. (Author/JM)

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THE WRITING OF SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

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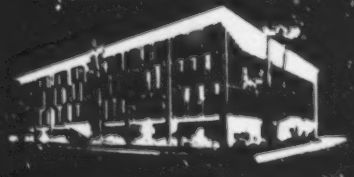

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RESEARCH AND SERVICES BULLETIN NO. 34

THE WRITING OF SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

by

ROBERT L. ARMSTRONG

Published by the

BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND SERVICES

MERWIN DEEVER, DIRECTOR

College of Education

Arizona State University

Tempe, Arizona

DECEMBER, 1973

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Price: $2.50

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PREFACE

The acceleration of evaluation of secondary schools into seven-year cycles, by a 1965 decision of the North Central Association, has brought to the forefront a glaring problem in the writing of school philosophy and objectives. Of all the tasks performed by the faculty in the self-evaluation process, this seems to present the greatest difficulty, the most confusion, and, ultimately, the greatest degree of frustration and disenchantment. More often than not the final result is a document to which few faculty members can subscribe and a general feeling of futility about the entire notion of objectives as a viable, directing force in school process and program.

This booklet is intended to help meet the specific needs of school faculties in the writing, or rewriting, of the school philosophy and objectives. In the early part of the book an effort is made to develop an understanding of the nature of behavioral objectives. For a more detailed treatment of this aspect the reader is referred to H. H. McAshan, *Writing Behavioral Objectives: A New Approach* and to Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*.

The writing of educational objectives is a vital task. The objectives are inextricably related to curriculum. In fact, the objectives might be considered as the curriculum itself. In the words of Gagné:

> A more satisfactory conception of content is as related to the goals of instruction, rather than to its effects. When so conceived, content must reflect goals that are independent of the media of instruction, whether these are the communications of a teacher, a textbook, or a television set. If the goals of instruction are involved in content, these must also be tied to the student's behavior, or perhaps to his expected behavior. These considerations lead to the idea that content needs to be stated as *objectives*, and that these objectives mean things that the student is able to accomplish. More specifically, content may be defined as *descriptions of the expected capabilities of students in specified domains of human activity*.[1]

If it is expedient and profitable to consider curriculum content as consisting of expected outcomes, then the writing of authentic and viable objectives becomes a most critical task.

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[1]Robert M. Gagne, *Perspectives of Curriculum Evaluation*, Monograph Series on Curriculum Evaluation, AERA, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1967, p. 21.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Philosophy

There seems to be a fair amount of agreement that all philosophy deals essentially with three basic questions: What is real? What is true? What is good?[1] For the philosophy of an institution such as a school this is basically true. However, greater specificity and direction is required. The philosophy of a school must supply guidelines and direction. It must supply goals and, hopefully, imply means or at least style of means. For our purposes the following definition may be helpful:

> The philosophy of a school is a framework of basic principles of education that express the staff's convictions on such essential points as the scope of the school's responsibility for the education of youth, the nature of the educative process, the characteristics and needs of the students whom it seeks to serve, the content and methods of instruction, desirable types of student activities, and the outcomes to be attained.[2]

This particular definition may seem unnecessarily prescriptive but at least it will serve as a jog to memory. The over-riding message is clear: the philosophy should express the corporate opinion of the school staff members concerning the things that they perceive as being important in the educational planning and process for young people.

As we examine the essential points that are mentioned in the above definition we can see that the topics being addressed are really those of 1) who should be served, 2) what should be involved in the service, 3) how the service should be rendered, and 4) within what limits the service should be rendered. *The scope of the school's responsibility for the education of youth* may have varied connotations. This phrase could refer to the dimensions within the child (intellectual, emotional, physical) or to areas of application (academic, vocational, social). Even within these general areas of application questions of appropriateness arise, such as the inclusion of sex education, family relations, evolution and other specific topics. In essence the question is really this, "Is the responsibility of the school that of treating

[1] Van Cleve Morris, *Philosophy and the American School*, (Houghton Mifflin, 1961) p. viii.

[2] *Evaluative Criteria: For the Evaluation of Secondary Schools*, National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, 4th Ed., Washington, D.C., 1969, p. 29.

all facets of the life of young people or are there limitations, areas into which the school must not enter?" Such a question is a very basic one and the answer to it must constitute a fundamental facet of the philosophy of a school.

Perhaps as important as the scope of the educative process is *the nature of the educative process*. The old saw, "It's not what you do but how you do it" is nowhere more valid than in education. The demeanor and style of the teacher, his perceptiveness of student desires and needs, his empathy or lack of it, all play an enormous role in the development of the student. This effect is not confined to the personal actions of the teacher, however. The policies of the total school concerning discipline, communication, use of community resources, etc. have a profound influence on the students. Nordstrom and others summarized the total school influence most succinctly when they said:

> This is because the school as a social system must have its own correlative institutional press. It pressures individuals participating in its system, through its administrative dicta, through the practices of its teachers and the activities of its students, through its rewards and punishments and the feelings they evoke, in all, through the totality of roles it demands or denies, accepts or rejects, validates or ignores, whether they are recognized as official or are not. These pressures operate on the individuals participating in the institution and, for better or for worse, reified as an institutional press, they operate to form character.[3]

The basis for all curriculum, of course, should be *the characteristics and needs of the students whom it (the school) seeks to serve*. Obviously it would be inappropriate to include in a statement of philosophy an exhaustive list of all the student characteristics and needs that have been observed or determined by the faculty. However, recognition of these aspects can appear in two ways: first, some general statement should be made of the attitude of the faculty toward the basic nature of human needs, followed by some acknowledgment of the unique characteristics of the particular school community; second, and perhaps more important, a treatment of specific needs must be inherent in the statement of objectives. In the final analysis, of course, all considerations must be treated in the statement of student outcomes (objectives) or the entire project is nothing more than an exercise in futility.

The content and methods of instruction is a topic not usually commented upon in a school philosophy, at least in this particular

[3]Carl Nordstrom, Edgar Z. Friedenberg and Hilary A. Gold, *Influence of Ressentiment on Student Experience in Secondary School*, United States Office of Education Cooperative Research Project, Number 1758 (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn College, 1965), p. 1.

context. Content is generally viewed as the result of the objectives; that is, it constitutes the body of knowledge and skills, and the collection of experiences, by which stated outcomes are attained. Methods of instruction are really a part of *the educative process.*

The topic of *the outcomes to be attained* is treated in its entirety by the objectives. A complete set of objectives will define, in a general way, the kind of student who ostensibly leaves the school upon graduation. It will specify the attributes and characteristics of educated human beings that are implied or inferred by the spirit of the position statement. In the evaluation document previously quoted, the text continues as follows:

> If the philosophy and objectives are to be functional, all members of the staff should participate in their formulation, rather than merely endorse a statement that they had no part in developing.[4]

The importance of this advice cannot be too greatly stressed. It might even be said that the most important aspect of the school philosophy is the act of writing it. By its very nature a document that is so much a product of prolonged discussion, agonizing compromises and subtleties of vocabulary is very nearly incomprehensible to any but those who participated in its creation, at least on an in-depth basis. This is not to say that an intelligent educator cannot study a school philosophy and understand its direction from a formal point of view. What will be lacking in his understanding is a feeling for the spirit of the document, a grasp of the total scope of the affective state that became a part of the nature of the creators in the act of creating. This is vitally important because it is this very nearly subliminal affective understanding on the part of the staff that shapes the total attitudinal, motivational, and psychological press of the institution. There is little question in the minds of many modern educators that this total school climate may, in the end result, have greater long-range impact on the students than the planned curriculum. In *The Unstudied Curriculum*, Philip Jackson said:

> The assertion that school attendance typically results in more than the acquisition of a set of academic skills or knowledge is hardly controversial enough to raise a single eyebrow among today's educators. Everyone, or certainly everyone who has given the matter any thought, will readily acknowledge that a student's progress in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other subdivisions of the curriculum tells only part of the story of what school has done to or for him. In addition to his growth in these conventional terms, there are alterations in attitudes, motives, values, and other psychological states that bear a complicated relationship to the experiences that he has had in the classroom. Indeed, some would argue that these nonacademic outcomes of formal education are

[4]Evaluative Criteria, op. cit.

> often of greater consequence for the student's ultimate well-being than are those changes commonly thought to be the main business of instruction.[5]

At this point we have done no more than scratch the surface of the topic. Lest the unwary reader feel that a brief resumé of content is sufficient preparation for the task it should be noted that the act of writing a corporate philosophy is an exceedingly arduous undertaking. It could be said with some justification that no set of instructions could truly prepare a group of teachers to write a school philosophy. However, faculties are too often defeated by structure and format considerations. This is wasteful and tragic because this type of defeat brings with it bitterness and disillusion. At least this problem may be alleviated.

Behavioral Objectives in a School Philosophy

It is an interesting characteristic of students that they tend to remain passive when the topic they are studying is rather easily acquired but that the entry into more difficult work generally fosters a barrage of questions such as, "why do we have to study this?", "of what use is this subject?" etc. Teachers, being after all merely grown up students, tend to react in much the same way. Although the appearance of the behavioral objective on the educational scene was greeted with enthusiastic if not entirely well-informed approval, the cries of "what good is it?", were soon rising from faculties who were attempting to write school philosophies in a behavioral format. Let us take a look at the question, "what good is it?"

There are many definitions of learning, but one that is probably as nearly universally acceptable as any reads as follows:

> *Learning*: Changes in behavior that result from previous behavior in similar situations (as opposed to changes due to physiological variations such as growth, deterioration, hunger, fatigue, alcohol, or sleep). Mostly, but by no means always, behavior comes demonstrably more effective and more adaptive after the exercise than it was before. In the broadest terms, then, learning refers to the effects of experience, either direct or symbolic, on subsequent behavior.[6]

Now, learning is what education is all about. If we accept the foregoing definition it follows that education is concerned with behavior. However, while it is obvious that this definition applies to everyday learning it may not be quite as obvious that

[5]Philip Jackson, "Introduction", *The Unstudied Curriculum*, Norman V. Overly (ed.), (Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA, 1970), p. ix.

[6]Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1964), p. 135.

it applies equally well to classroom learning. For example, if a child places his hand on a heated stove burner he will feel pain. At a later time, when tempted to repeat the act, he may refrain from doing so because of the memory of the pain. Thus he has changed his behavior as a result of "previous behavior in similar situations." Such a change in behavior could be said to be a beneficial result of a learning experience.

Consider now an analogous classroom situation. Assume that the teacher has posed a question concerning the year in which Columbus sailed across the Atlantic Ocean for the first time. Let us further assume that a young lady named Susie has raised her hand and given some such answer as "1592." For an answer such as this the teacher might give any of a number of replies ranging from, "no, that is not correct" to "you lazy girl, you haven't read your lesson." Now it is entirely possible that Susie will accept the criticism as a spur to greater efforts. On the other hand, it seems at least barely possible that she may resolve not to answer any more questions in class. Would the latter behavior be termed as a form of learning? Has she altered her behavior as a result of previous behavior in a similar situation? The answer is, emphatically, yes. But, the reader will protest, the latter behavior is not a "beneficial" result of a learning experience. Perhaps not by the teacher's criteria, but from Susie's point of view it must seem like a very beneficial result. The point is that whichever of these outcomes occurred the result was a behavior, and it was a learned behavior, not one resulting from some physiological cause. Of course, this example is not concerned with what would be called academic behaviors. Such behaviors might include the listings of facts, demonstration of a skill, the writing of a narrative, an oral presentation, etc.

Returning for a moment to the original question, "What good is it?", have we found an acceptable answer? Learning results in a change of behavior, hence educational objectives should be behavioral. But, again the reader may protest and say that while this is all very fine, what is really important is for the school to identify the "means" of educating the child. The question that now arises is that of whether our criteria for choice between "ends" and "means" is one of priorities or order. Perhaps two examples will illuminate the problem somewhat.

The first example is hypothetical, and perhaps a trifle facetious, but it should serve our purpose. It consists of a listing of four possible objectives of a parachute factory, any one of which might be considered as the prime goal of the factory. They are as follows:

1. The factory will make its parachutes of the finest materials available.
2. The factory will employ the finest craftsmen available.
3. The factory will be operated by the most efficient production methods that are available.
4. The factory will make a parachute such that, when the string is pulled, it will open and let a human body to the ground without injury to that body.

If the reader chooses any but objective number four as the most important the writer will be very much surprised. Hence, on the question of priorities, "ends" wins over "means," hands down. No doubt some readers will now jump to the apparently obvious conclusion that while "ends" is the victor over "means" in the priorities race the reverse will be true in the "order" contest. After all, means must precede ends.

For this problem the second example is in order. This example takes the form of a story and goes as follows:

> The head gardener of a large estate one day said to his not-too-bright assistant, "I have a task for you. Select a tool with which to do it." Without hesitation the assistant chose a rake. The gardener led his assistant to a far part of the estate. Then indicating
> 6 a low, swamp area he said, "Your task is to dig a tile ditch through that marsh."

The point of this childish narrative is that while means indeed do precede ends in the action phase, the identification of ends must precede the identification of means in the decision phase. Had the assistant known ahead of time what his task was to be it is hardly likely that he would have chosen a garden rake with which to do it. And that is precisely the whole point in writing educational objectives. Until the desired outcomes are known, there exist no realistic criteria for selecting means. On both counts, of priorities and order, *ends* wins out over *means*.

In the act of attempting to justify the use of the behavioral objective we have gone some distance in defining it. First and foremost it is an objective that is focused on outcome. Further, it is focused on a behavioral form of outcome. For example, instead of writing *"The student will be exposed to examples of good citizenship,"* we might write, *"The student will demonstrate attributes of good citizenship."* At this point it might be wise to mention that some persons might insist that the latter objective be written in some such manner, as follows:

> The student will demonstrate attributes of good citizenship by voting in all elections, observing the laws of the community, and by being actively engaged in appropriate civic endeavors.

In other words, they would insist that the set of discrete behaviors, which together constitute the central behavior of the objective, should all be stated as part of the objective. The problem with this approach is that for many objectives, particularly those at the general school level, this would result in lengthy and enormously cumbersome statements. On the other hand, at the teaching level such a statement form may be necessary.

One last topic begs discussion. This is the question concerning "good" and "bad" behavioral objectives. It seems likely that an objective could be properly written as a behavioral objective and still not be very helpful from an educational point of view. There are two dimensions that enter in here. One is the matter of appropriateness, and that is uniquely a concern of the subject or discipline itself. The other is a question of the observability, or measurability, of the behavior. Two examples may suffice. The first treats with appropriateness and is as follows:

> Given a list of fifty common diseases, the medical resident will be able to name and describe the symptoms of each.

Obviously this is a soundly written behavioral objective. That is, it is focused on outcome and clearly specifies a behavior. The question of appropriateness arises when we investigate the manner in which doctors normally make identification in the area of diseases. In actual practice the procedure is the reverse of the one stated in the objective. Thus there is some question as to the appropriateness of the specified behavior in the light of realistic practice.

The dimension of measurability or observability is partly a matter of existing instruments for observation and partly a matter of common sense. The reader may compare the following two objectives:

1. The student will appreciate the music of Beethoven.
2. The student will be able to identify a selection from Beethoven, when it is played along with selections from two other composers from the same period, and will be able to list at least three attributes that distinguish Beethoven compositions from others of the period.

It must be immediately apparent to the reader that the first of these two objectives contains an outcome that would be very difficult to observe or measure. On the other hand, the ability to identify a Beethoven selection and to name attributes of Beethoven compositions is both observable and measurable.

Are we, then, to sacrifice all affective goals to the expediency of observability and measurability? Must "appreciation," "aware-

ness," "enjoyment," etc. be omitted from aims of education because they cannot be so readily identified and measured? No thinking educator would seriously make such a contention. The problem is simply that many teachers think only in terms of these affective outcomes to the exclusion of identifiable behaviors. The trick here is to isolate observable behaviors that are either symptomatic of the desired affective goals, or are such that the achievement of them would be likely to create a favorable predisposition for the attainment of the affective goals. For example, the observed behavior of a student checking out a large number of novels from the library, over a period of time, could mean that he is trying to impress his teacher. It could also mean that he has learned to enjoy reading. Thus his observable behavior may well be symptomatic of his attainment of an affective goal. As an example of predisposition we might consider the Beethoven objectives above. While it must be conceded that the behaviors mentioned in the second objective will give no iron-clad assurance that the student will enjoy or appreciate Beethoven, it certainly is true that unless he listens to some Beethoven, and unless he listens to enough so that he can identify Beethoven among other composers, there is little chance that he will ever "appreciate" Beethoven.

8 One last general comment may be in order. There seems to be considerable confusion in some quarters about the difference between a behavioral objective and an instructional objective. This is analogous to a confusion about the difference between a car and a Ford. Just as a Ford is a specific kind of car, the instructional objective in its commonly used sense, is a specific kind of behavioral objective. Essentially it is a very specific, teaching-level objective that has some aids to evaluation built in. Consider the following example:

> Given a list of the ten longest rivers in the world, the student will be able to write them in order of length without reference to any supportive material, in a ten-minute period, with no more than one error in ranking.

A geography teacher might not consider this a particularly appropriate objective. However, it is a validly written instructional objective. It is focused on an outcome (student knowledge of the ten longest rivers) and it identifies a student behavior (to write them in order of length). Hence, it is a behavioral objective. Further, it specifies conditions under which the task will be performed (it must be done in ten minutes from memory) and the acceptable competence level (no more than one mistake in ranking). Thus, it is a particular kind of behavioral objective, an instructional objective.

The question of using behavioral objectives for general student objectives is a moot one. Ultimately it must depend on the broadness of the definition of "behavioral." Certainly the general objectives must be focused on outcomes. Further, most outcomes must be such that they can be translated into some forms of behavior for measurement purposes. However, there is little question that the appropriateness and completeness of the student objectives are more important than strict adherence to a particular form. This point is discussed in greater detail in Chapter III, The General Objective.

CHAPTER II
THE POSITION STATEMENT

There is a certain ambiguity of vocabulary in the area of philosophy and objectives. At times the document referred to as the philosophy is the prefacing statement, while the list of goals is referred to as the statement of objectives. At other times, the entire package is referred to as the school philosophy. To prevent confusion it will be our pattern here to refer to the "philosophical," or "corporate stance" portion of the philosophy as the "position statement." The listing of goals, by whatever hierarchial arrangement, will be called the "general objectives." There is certainly nothing sacred about these terms but they seem sufficiently descriptive to enable a discussion to continue without undue confusion.

Purpose of the Position Statement

In reference to what we are calling the position statement, the *Evaluative Criteria* contains the following:

> It is an expression of fundamental beliefs concerning the role of the school in society, its responsibility in providing education opportunities, the nature of the educative processes, and the scope and relationships of services that are regarded as essential in attaining objectives.[1]

The position statement might be thought of as the means to "set the stage" for the writing of the general objectives. In effect, the writing of a position statement forces the writers (faculty, staff, parents, students, etc.) to clarify their thinking, to assume a stance, to take a stand, to say, "This is what we believe, these are our considered convictions concerning human needs and our role as educators in meeting these needs." The value of the position statement is not just found in the existence of a written document from which goals may be inferred, but in the act of the writing, it becomes a thing of value to each involved person as that person studies, examines, weighs, judges, and refines personal attitudes and convictions in the act of developing a corporate position.

There are other reasons for a position statement. A person who maintains that a list of student objectives is a sufficient guide for the development and conduct of a school program is

[1] *Evaluative Criteria: For the Evaluation of Secondary Schools*, National Study of Secondary School Evaluation, 4th Ed., Washington, D.C., 1969, p. 30.

overlooking three important points: 1) As soon as ends are identified means must be developed. Of what administrative style should these means be formed? What experiences, resources and processes are legitimate and appropriate in the light of the overall corporate philosophical attitude? Such questions and considerations may ultimately be conceived as a formalized set of "operational objectives." In whatever manner these considerations are treated it is vitally important that they are treated in a clear manner that will provide the necessary guidelines and encouragement for frontier exploration as well as the philosophical structural basis for the ongoing program. 2) There is no reason to believe that any given set of student objectives is complete or final. Not only would such objectives have to be considered tentative from the standpoint of refinement and completeness but the nature of our changing society would predicate a continual re-examination and re-evaluation of student objectives. Only out of a carefully developed corporate position on human needs and the role of education can the objectives be extended, refined or changed in an intelligent and realistic manner. 3) The corporate philosophical position of the staff is itself subject to review and renewal. Without a carefully developed statement of this corporate philosophical position, as a measuring stick, the grass root changes in societal attitudes and priorities might go undetected as far as translation into student objectives is concerned. This position statement, then, is both a bellweather and a benchmark. It is the guiding principle for operation and exploration, and it is the barometer of changing times.

Content of the Position Statement

The reference from the Evaluative Criteria (above) might be considered sufficient direction for content of the position statement by many schools. Others will wish a more complete statement of beliefs, in particular, beliefs about human nature and human needs. Even where structural formats are similar, substantially different commitments may be expressed. A typical position statement that is simple in scope is included here:

> The philosophy of the Tempe Union High School District, in accordance with the ideals of American democracy, is to provide equal educational opportunities for all students. As a result, our efforts are directed toward the development of a student as an individual with dignity, and as an effective citizen of our democracy. In directing our efforts toward this goal, consideration is given to existing variations in individual capacities and interests. Consequently, the administrative staff and the teaching staff, as a team, work with parents and community groups to further physical, intellectual, and ethical growth of all students. True education is

more than an accumulation of knowledge; it is important that students be helped to develop methods for meeting the problems they will face in a rapidly changing society.[1]

In this statement the writers have treated with the following questions: 1) Out of what philosophical-societal basis do our beliefs grow? (American democracy with equal opportunity for all), 2) What are the major outcomes to be expected? (Individual dignity, effective citizenship, possession of methods for meeting problems of changing society), 3) What facet of human characteristics is important to us? (varying capacities and interests), 4) What is our legitimate educational scope? (physical, intellectual, ethical), and 5) What resources may appropriately be involved in the educational process? (parents and community).

The reader may wish to argue that some of the answers do not seem very complete. However, that point is immaterial here. We must assume that the writers of the document (presumably a committee of educators in that district) wrote whatever they felt was germane to the task of identifying their fundamental educational commitments, and in setting the stage for the objectives that would follow. Further, the reader must remember that our analysis was an *ex post facto* act. It is quite possible that the writers of the philosophy were not thinking in terms
12 of these questions when they wrote.

The following position statement is a somewhat more complex attempt to accomplish essentially the same purpose:

Sahuaro High School is a community related institution which provides an educational program designed to teach, motivate, and encourage each individual to realize his full potential—emotionally, socially, physically, academically, and vocationally. A basic purpose is to enable the individual to adapt economically and socially to changing local, state, national, and world environments. The school should provide a program which fits the needs of the community and which offers a well balanced education to every student regardless of status, mental or physical condition, creed, or race. Due to the wide range of abilities, ambitions, socio-economic, and other factors, the curricula of the school is designed to serve the diverse needs of many individuals.

The educational program embraces all the experiences students have under the direction and supervision of school authorities. These experiences are curricular and co-curricular in nature.

The relationship between the school and community, students and students, and students and teachers is to be fully defined and is basic in planning the program of the school.

I. What we believe about the individual student:

A. The school is to help each student, within the limits of available personnel, facilities, material resources, and especially in developing:

[1] *Faculty Handbook, McClintock High School*, 1967-68, Tempe Union High District, Tempe, Arizona.

1. student responsibility for his own learning;
2. curiosity and love of learning;
3. habits of intellectual inquiry;
4. creativity and imagination;
5. critical and analytical thinking;
6. communication skills, oral and written;
7. tolerance and respect for others and for opinions of others;
8. increased awareness of alternatives;
9. problem-solving ability and decision-making ability;
10. initiative;
11. self-discipline;
12. adjustment to life in a society;
13. acceptance of responsibility and consequences of actions;
14. wholesome self-concepts and realistic levels of aspirations;
15. a meaningful and integrated system of values;
16. as well as other fundamental, valid, and important educational goals.

B. Each student is different but possesses much in common with his peers.

C. Individual capabilities vary as does the capacity for growth and development.

D. Each individual has certain unique basic physical, mental, moral, emotional, and social needs which require satisfaction.

II. What we believe about the learning process:

A. The task of the school is to teach students how to learn so as to understand the social, political, economic, and scientific forces which affect them.

B. Learning is a continuous process and is most effective when purposive in character. Learning takes place through the active participation in problematic situations significant to the learner.

C. The learning process is interaction between the student as he is and his environment, including a continuous development of techniques and exposure to facts.

D. An aim of the school is to develop each individual's capacity to assume increased responsibility for his own education.

E. Knowledge is by nature unified rather than fragmented. Subject matter fields are related and the interrelations of knowledge should be demonstrated in the school.

III. What we believe about the school:

A. The school should help provide for the emotional, social, physical, mental, and moral growth of each individual.

B. The program should continually reflect what is known about the changes that take place in our youngsters and how they learn.

C. The school should help provide opportunities for each student to grow and develop along lines suited to his particular abilities and consistent with the concept of living in a democratic society.

D. The school should meet the basic purposes of education, i.e., self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency, and social responsibility.

IV. What we believe about living in a democratic society:

A. The individual should have liberties to the degree to which he respects the rights and freedoms of others.

B. Each individual should assume certain civic responsibilities in order to preserve our democratic heritage.

C. Our way of life should stress the dignity of the individual and should protect each person from exploitation by society. Society must also be protected from exploitation by the individual

D. Our society should assume the protection of minorities while championing the right of the majority to govern.[3]

Not only does this position statement render more detailed answers to the same questions as those used in analyzing the previous statement, but it treats of an additional question or two as well. For example, in I-D there is a brief treatment of the scope of human needs. Section II concerns aspects of the learning process. It may be noted in passing that the scope of education list in I-A is very nearly what many schools would designate as the list of general objectives. Further comments on this point will be made in the following chapter.

It has not been our purpose here to criticize the above examples, either from a structural point of view or in terms of content. The purpose was to illustrate the fact that there is a great deal of variety in the documents known as position statements, in length, topical coverage, and complexity of treatment. There is no "right" way to do the job, in the sense of a consistent or uniform format. "Rightness" can only be judged by the writers of the document in the light of their own convictions and commitments.

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The following position statement, taken from a collection of sample school philosophies at the Department of Secondary Education, Arizona State University, provides an example of an extremely simple and rather different approach, as compared to the two previous examples:

> The sole purpose for the existence of this institution is to provide "things," within the framework of the needs and desires of the individual, as perceived by both the individual and his society. These "things" should be of two varieties:
> 1) Those which provide the basic skills and attitudes necessary to survive in a rapidly changing society. These are more "common" than "individual," and are primarily categorized as *needs*.
> 2) Those skills and attitudes which go beyond the basics are not common to all. These skills and attitudes should be available, insofar as is possible, to any individual or group of individuals who desire them. These are primarily categorized as *desires*.[4]

If we refer to the questions that were answered by the first

[3]*Sahuaro High School Faculty Handbook*, Tucson School District No. 1, Tucson, Arizona.

[4]Derek I. Bloomfield, *Cabeza de Vaca High School: Philosophy, Objectives, Student Activity Program and Constitution* (unpublished position paper on student activities, Arizona State University, 1970).

position statement above, we find that the only one that is here treated is that of legitimate educational scope. The scope is here conceived as the provision of "things" (ostensibly program and facilities) that will make possible the development of *needs* skills and *desires* skills within each student. Note that the treatment of scope in this example is very different than the analogous treatment in the first example (physical, intellectual, ethical). Yet, it cannot be fairly contended that the last example is "better" or "worse" (by any reasonable definition of these words) than the first. The matter of judgment rests essentially with the writers of the philosophy. Does it provide the direction, the focus, the limitations, the boundaries that the writers perceive as appropriate when all considerations are taken into account? If the answer to both of these questions is affirmative then the document must be considered as valid in the setting for which it has been designed.

Does this mean that any school philosophy, no matter how inane or how poorly written, is above criticism simply because it was written by people in the community to which it applies? By no means. People are, after all, human. They have limited vision, limited sources of information and limited compositional capabilities. The point here is that because each school philosophy is a product and outgrowth of a unique community and group of people it cannot be arbitrarily judged in toto by some exterior standards of "rightness" or "wrongness." The flip side of this statement is that a faculty (or any group that has assumed the task of writing a philosophy) cannot depend on other school philosophies in writing its own. Any philosophy-writing group must ultimately set the stage for its goals and objectives by identifying those points (of humanness, humaneness, educational process, etc.) that it considers to be both necessary and sufficient in clarifying the issues and generating outcomes.

CHAPTER III
THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES

There is some controversy concerning the nature of the general objectives in the school philosophy. One opinion is that the objectives should treat with the efforts and provisions made by the school to meet the educational needs of the students. Objectives in a philosophy such as this might resemble the following:

> The school will provide a broad, flexible curriculum designed to give all students a general education, to prepare college preparatory students, and furnish vocational skills to terminal students.

And what is wrong with this objective as a general objective? Nothing at all, if its role is properly viewed and if it is properly located in the philosophy. And just what is "the proper view?" Proponents of a second opinion would view such an objective as an "operational objective," and properly a part of the position statement. The point here is that this objective is not a "student" objective in that it does not focus on an outcome.

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It must now be obvious that this second opinion is that the true objectives of the school are more concerned with student outcomes. These are the objectives that describe the kinds of students that should result from the educational process of the school. Robert F. Mager is credited with a charming and rather succinct fable of the contemporary variety. It seems that a naive young sea horse, on his way to find his fortune, was conned out of his life savings by an eel and sponge of ill repute. Finally, the little sea horse was offered a short cut to his fortune through the mouth of a shark, with understandably disastrous results. "The moral of this fable is that if you're not sure where you're going, you're liable to end up someplace else – and not even know it."[1] There is still another aspect to the question. Just as the not-too-bright assistant to the head gardener found, when he tried to dig a tile ditch with a rake, so do educators find when they try to operate an educational system when they don't know what product they want. You have to know what you want to accomplish or you won't be able to develop the tools with which to accomplish it. The objective stated above really belongs to the "means" part of the process. It designates "things" that the school will do, *once the school has identified the outcomes it wishes to achieve.*

[1]Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives*, (Palo Alto: Fearon Publishers, 1962), p. vii.

The use of student outcomes as the fundamental aims of the school provides a two-edged sword. Until the desired outcomes are identified the development of means is no more than an academic exercise, and if outcomes are not identified, there will be no criteria for deciding when anything has been achieved. In the following two sections the aspects of form and content are treated briefly.

The Form of General Objectives

Perhaps it is sufficient merely to acknowledge that the objectives portion of the philosophy should be stated in terms of student outcomes. However, an issue alluded to in Chapter II creates some problems for the writer of the philosophy. The issue in point concerns the question of whether it is sufficient simply to state an objective in terms of a student outcome, or if discrete behaviors must be identified as well. Possibly the question is merely one of adequately defining "behavior."

Let us refer to the example used in Chapter I. An objective was stated as follows:

> The student will demonstrate attributes of good citizenship.

This objective is certainly stated in terms of a student outcome. Now examine the alternative form of this objective, as follows:

> The student will demonstrate attributes of good citizenship by voting in all elections, observing the laws of the community, and by being actively engaged in appropriate civic endeavors.

In this form of the objective, not only is an outcome identified but discrete behaviors are identified as well. Now, the question is: are we dealing with one objective which specifies behaviors and one which does not, or are we merely dealing with two objectives that specify behavior at different levels? Does the statement

> "Mary raises flowers."

specify a behavior or merely identify an outcome? Is it necessary to say,

> "Mary spades the earth, rakes it smooth; plants flower seeds, irrigates the plot, and pulls the weeds."

in order to specify behavior? As long as we are on the topic we might well take the stance that even "Mary spades the earth" is not specific enough and should really be stated as,

> "Mary places the point of the spade against the soil, pushes down with her left foot, levers the handle down, etc."

Let us return to the objective concerning good citizenship. Is "good citizenship" a form of behavior? It seems likely that it can

be considered so, although it is less specific than the equivalent objective which follows. Actually, it would be quite difficult to write an objective in one statement which would specify *all* the discrete behaviors involved. Certainly there is more to good citizenship than merely voting, observing laws, and becoming involved in civic endeavors. Further, each of these behaviors can be reduced to a set of more specific behaviors. Perhaps it will be more productive to state the general objectives in broad, comprehensive terms. Greater specificity might be more efficiently handled through the use of sub-objectives.

One point needs our attention. With our acceptance of "the student will demonstrate attributes of good citizenship" as an appropriate objective at the general level, we may well be vulnerable to the accusation that we have indulged in a very broad, even loose, definition of "behavior." The accusation is probably valid. However, labels seem less important than expediency, at least if those labels get in the way of the job to be done. The real question is: can the stated objective be defined by a set of supporting behavioral objectives which can ultimately be translated into educational programs? We have already indicated that the "good citizenship" objective could be handled in this way. Now, how about some such objective as,

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"The student will appreciate the democratic way of life."?

If such an objective as this is going to have any value, then there must be a way determined to define it in terms of specific behaviors in a set of sub-objectives. Of course, the key word is "appreciate." Is it a behavior of some sort? Is it an observable behavior? Can it be measured? The reader will probably answer negatively to all three questions.

We now face three alternatives: 1) throw out the objective 2) come up with a specific definition of "appreciate," or 3) rewrite the objective in terms of a behavior that we can better observe and measure, which behavior will either be symptomatic of our desired goal (appreciation) or indicative of a favorable predisposition toward the accomplishment of this goal. If we choose the first of these alternatives we are done. If we choose either the second or third we will find on closer examination that they are really the same. Our choice will ultimately depend on whether or not we want our objective to "sound behavioral." In either case we are going to have to define "appreciate" or we will certainly not know what is our goal. Further, it goes without saying that we must define what we mean by "democratic way of life." Now, if we can define "democratic way of life" in terms of basic rights to all, fundamental worth and dignity of the

human, protection of the minority, peaceful dissent, etc., and if, further, we can define "appreciate" as involving knowledge, comprehension, application, and evaluation (from Bloom's taxonomy)[1] then we are well on our way to developing a set of workable objectives no matter which alternative we choose.

Just as an example, let us consider how we might write the objective if we choose the third alternative. It might be written as follows:

> The student practices the democratic philosophy and attitude in his daily life.

Sub-objectives (supporting objectives) might be some such as follows:

> 1. The student demonstrates basic courtesy toward his classmates.
> 2. In a group discussion the student listens to others' points of view without interruption.
> 3. When involved in any decision process, the student considers the consequences for all persons involved in the decision.

Does the demonstration of these practices assure us that the student genuinely "appreciates" the democratic way of life? Probably not, but it seems likely that these practices are at least likely symptoms.

There is no intrinsic right or wrong in the writing of the general objectives. Persons charged with the writing of a school philosophy must ultimately express themselves in some form that seems efficient and comfortable to them. However, it is suggested that at the very least these objectives should concern student outcomes. If nothing else, the evaluation of the educational process depends on it. It is no real chore to evaluate an objective that is stated in terms of things that the school will provide. The real question is whether or not anything is happening to the students because of these things that the school is doing or providing. 19

It is further suggested that the outcomes stated in the objectives should be stated in terms that can be defined and identified by observable behaviors. The reader must keep in mind that this suggestion does not mitigate against affective objectives or the use of such terms as "appreciate" or "enjoy." It does mean that such objectives should be associated with identifiable behaviors. If the suggestions in this chapter are taken seriously it will not mean that affective objectives will be discarded but that teachers will develop an increased awareness of behaviors that are symptomatic of the desired outcomes.

[1]Benjamin S. Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, (New York: Longmans, Green, 1956).

The Content of the General Objectives

The content of the general objectives requires only two guidelines: 1) they must not simply reflect the spirit of the position statement but must effectively translate that spirit into appropriate student outcomes, and 2) they must be exhaustive, treating of every aspect of the student that is felt to be the legitimate bailiwick of the educational process.

Two sample philosophies are reproduced here in their entirety. Both are brief, shorter than most school philosophies. Both are written according to the format discussed in the previous section. Both are from the collection of sample school philosophies of the Secondary Education Department, Arizona State University. The first is anonymous. The second is from the position paper of Bloomfield and was partially reproduced in the previous chapter. The intent of reproducing them in the text is for the reader to study them and make some judgments as to the degree to which the two guidelines have been fulfilled.

Philosophy I

The aim of this educational system is to give the student the opportunity to gain those contents and skills which will best enable him to be a creative individual, a responsible citizen, and a competent member of society.

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Objectives:

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the democratic process and practice the democratic way of life.
2. The student will demonstrate competency in the basic skills of communication.
3. The student will demonstrate sound practices of physical and mental health.
4. The student will demonstrate sound social relationships.
5. The student will demonstrate capability in problem-solving techniques.
6. The student will be an adequate decision-maker.
7. The student will be able to use leisure time productively.

Philosophy II[3]

The sole purpose for the existence of this institution is to provide "things" within the framework of the needs and desires of the individual as perceived by both the individual and his society. These "things" should be of two varieties:

1. those which provide the basic skills and attitudes necessary to survive in a rapidly changing society. These are more common than individual and are primarily categorized as *needs*.
2. those skills and attitudes which go beyond the basics and are not common to all. These skills and attitudes should be available, insofar

[3]Derek I. Bloomfield, *Cabeza de Vaca High School: Philosophy Objectives, Student Activities Program and Constitution (unpublished position paper on student activities, Arizona State University, 1970).*

as is possible, to any individual or group of individuals who desire them. These are primarily categorized as *desires*.

Objectives:

1. The student must demonstrate that he is able to adapt to rapid changes in his environment and in rapidly changing requirements for skills, attitudes and values on the part of the student.
2. The student must demonstrate techniques of problem solving and must be able to solve any variety of problems.
3. The student must demonstrate self-direction.
4. The student must demonstrate that he is able to communicate adequately.
5. The student must demonstrate a knowledge of the structure of those skills necessary for successful involvement in the economy of the society.
6. The student must demonstrate that he is able to love and be loved by his fellow man.
7. The student must demonstrate evaluation techniques of self and others, and situations.
8. The student must demonstrate an ability to use leisure time.

Let us consider them in order. The first is exceptionally brief and appears not to offer too many difficulties. Two main thoughts stand out in the position statement. One concerns the kind of person that should result from the educational process (a creative individual, responsible citizen, competent member of society) and the other is a very brief reference to the nature of the educational process (opportunity). In the latter it is at least inferred that the educational process will consist of experiential opportunities rather than pressure, coercion, regimentation, etc.

To test the adequacy of the objectives of the first philosophy, it is necessary to refer to the general description of the product as noted above. Certainly the "competent member of society" involves objectives 1, 2, 4 and possibly 7. The "responsible citizen" involves objectives 1 and possibly 5 and 6. The "creative individual" is a little sticky. Certainly objectives 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 concern the person as an individual. Do they concern him as a "creative" individual? This may depend on an adequate definition of "creative." Herbert Gutman has defined creative behavior as follows:

> Creative behavior consists in any activity by which man imposes a new order upon his environment. It is organizing activity. More specifically, it is the original act by which that organization is first conceived and given objective expression.[4]

If we use this definition of creativity, it seems possible that the logical-step techniques implied in objectives 5 and 6 would constitute an adequate treatment of "the creative individual." On

[4]Herbert Gutman, "The Biological Roots of Creativity," *Explorations in Creativity*, Ross L. Mooney and Taher A. Razik (eds.), (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 5-6.

the other hand, Gutman added a very different dimension to the notion of creativity when he said:

> Creative behavior, by its very nature, is spontaneous, inner-directed, ordinarily not capable of being elicited at will, therefore, it is unpredictable and escapes manipulation and control. It is generally not amenable to experimentation.[3]

When creative behavior is viewed from this standpoint, it seems less than likely that "the creative individual" is noted in any of the seven outcome objectives.

The question of whether or not the objectives constitute an exhaustive treatment of outcomes must be considered on the basis of what is considered the legitimate jurisdiction of the school. This will vary from one community to another. In this particular philosophy, the jurisdiction is not clear. Intellectual needs are certainly treated in objectives 2, 5, and 6, but it might appropriately be said that the nurturing of curiosity and the development of a method of inquiry are missing and should be included. Physical needs are at least noted in objective 3. Emotional needs of some type are treated in objectives 1, 3, 4 and 7. However, a critical observer might consider this treatment too fragmentary. The observer might also note that there is a lack of transcendent, synthesizing objectives, those concerning self-realization and self-actualization of the individual.

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In a very brief examination of the second philosophy, above, we might note that the position statement mentions that the role of the school is to provide "things" (presumably facilities, experiences, opportunities, etc.) to fulfill two categories of student satisfactions – needs and desires. This latter dichotomy may be viewed as a way of treating with the legitimate bailiwick of the school by another dimension. Student perceptions must loom as of major importance in this philosophy. Further, such a classification of outcomes appears to designate the jurisdiction of the school's educational endeavor as very nearly total.

The objectives seem adequate as far as the "needs" portion of the position statement is concerned. Life-coping skills are treated in objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and, to some extent, 7. Any student of psychology would very likely admit objective 6 is concerned with a need. This leaves objective 8 as the only one that is related to student desires. It might well be argued that leisure-time activity is a genuine human need. A counter argument might be that while leisure time is a "need" certainly a human can meet this need by doing something that he "desires" to do. Thus we see the distinction between needs and desires may be difficult to make, at times.

[3]Ibid, p. 3.

A criticism that has frequently been leveled at objectives in general and general school objectives in particular is that they are liable to a wide range of interpretation by those who would put them into practice. There are two comments that should be made about this criticism. One is that the group of persons writing the philosophy should not terminate their efforts when the position statement and general objectives are completed. They should continue on and translate each general objective into supporting objectives, which objectives should then be further translated into subject-matter objectives, and then into professional (operational) objectives and program.

The other comment is that no matter how specific the writers of a philosophy attempt to make the objectives, there will always be varying interpretations, and this is as it should be. In fact, some school faculties prefer not to specify their objectives beyond the general objective level, so that maximum freedom of interpretation is possible. This freedom of interpretation at some level of specificity is vitally important to the richness and depth of the educational process. It is difficult to imagine how sterile an educational process might become if every observable outcome were predetermined.

CHAPTER IV
PROCEDURES FOR WRITING A SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Two items are of interest in this area, group composition and procedures. Although it is not really feasible to separate these two aspects completely, there are some differences in each that are independent of the other.

Composition of the Philosophy Writing Group

In recent years an increasing number of schools have attempted to represent all points of view on philosophy committees by involving not only school personnel but community members and students, as well. In order for a school faculty to determine the optimal composition of a philosophy committee it might be instructive to examine each named representative by considering the stake that that person or group of persons has in the writing of the philosophy. The question is: what does that person (or group) have to contribute to the philosophy and what does that person (or group) have to gain by being a part of the philosophy writing group?

The most obvious candidates for membership in the philosophy writing committee are the *classroom teachers.* As a group, they possess a spectrum of skills and knowledges that might be lumped under the general term, "professional expertise." Further, they are the persons with most contact with the student in the educational setting. On the other side of the coin, they have much to gain by being involved. Perhaps more than any other group the classroom teachers need to be steeped in the spirit and substance of the philosophy so that this philosophy will permeate the entire school atmosphere and shape the school climate.

The comments concerning the classroom teachers apply in general to other professional staff such as *administrators, counselors, consultants and supervisors.* Such persons sometimes have briefer contacts with students than do the classroom teachers, or they may meet students on a fundamentally different basis, but in general they have similar types of contributions to make to the philosophy and similar values to gain from being involved in the writing.

Non-professional staff members are often overlooked in the process of forming a philosophy committee. It has been argued

that these persons (medical, clerical, secretarial, custodial, etc.) feel themselves at a disadvantage in a group of professional educators and are reluctant to contribute to the group effort. This is a valid consideration. However, if there are other non-professional representatives (community members and students), and if the group is properly handled, this need not pose a problem. From the contribution point of view, the non-professional people in the school have an opportunity to see students and school programs from a direction that is often quite different from that of the professional person. Because their contacts with the students are generally of the informal and non-threatening variety (as opposed to the professional's role as punisher and grade-giver), it is possible that the feedback that they receive is more realistic than that of the professional. On the other hand, their understanding of the over-all aims of the schools may be of great importance in school climate and logistical effort. The secretary who understands and sympathizes with the humanistic intent of the faculty may conduct herself quite differently in her contact with the students than she might have otherwise. The janitor who has some understanding of the faculty needs in creating more flexible classrooms is more likely to be cooperative and supportive in his efforts.

When the involvement of *community members* is discussed, the assumption that *everyone* can be involved cannot be seriously entertained. While this puts serious limitations on the contribution that these people can make from direct involvement in the program, it does not necessarily limit the contribution that they can make to the writing of the philosophy. If the community members are chosen so that they represent an acceptable cross-section of the community, and if, they actively solicit the opinions of others in the community who are of the same status, their contribution would not only be valid but essential. Further, they have a right to be involved and would be understandably hostile if they were not. The school can ill-afford the hostility of its community.

Educators often view the involvement of *students* with varying degrees of skepticism. The most common comment is that persons of high school age do not really know what is best for them. Another view is that their involvement is only transitory because they will generally be in the school no more than four years. Neither of these viewpoints is valid. The second is very nearly absurd. In our democratically oriented society, does not even a person under legal age have the right to some role in the shaping of his destiny? If the student perceives that the educational experiences in which he is involved are genuinely realistic

and of value to him, will it not be likely to affect the quality of his learning? Regardless of how the reader may feel about these questions, there is considerable evidence to indicate that it is a mistake to omit the student in the planning process.

Let us review the composition of a philosophy writing committee. Optimally, it appears that all professional and non-professional staff should be involved, with representation from the community and student body. The size of such a group need not present a serious problem. This will be discussed under *Procedures*. The selection of the community and student representatives may pose a slight difficulty. There are probably several equitable ways in which it can be accomplished. However, one way that usually seems to be a mistake is for some person or group of persons in authority to arbitrarily select the representatives. This often results in a hand-picked group of students, generally from student council, and in a choice of the most socially or economically "prominent" citizens. Even if the most able persons are thus selected, the manner in which the selection takes place generally breeds the distrust of those whom they ostensibly represent. Delegates that are picked by direct election, or who are selected by an elected committee, will more nearly satisfy all persons involved.

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Procedures of the Philosophy Writing Group

The writer has espoused the total involvement of the school staff in the act of writing the philosophy. So essential is this point considered to be; that it does not seem productive to consider any other arrangements. To the degree that a substantial portion of the professional and or non-professional st. are excluded from the writing process so will the philosophy lack value for the school. It is not only unlikely that a teacher will make any real commitment to a document in the writing of which he has shared no part, it is very nearly impossible for him to do so on an authentic level.

In a typical situation in even a relatively enlightened school, the philosophy committee will consist of from ten to twenty-five members. These will be teachers, counselors, one or more administrators, perhaps some non-professional staff representation, community citizens and two or three students. If the members of the group are astute, or astutely led, they will probably begin their task by spending a great deal of time in individual and group talk. At some point in this phase the group will begin to spend a considerable amount of time discussing human nature, human needs and the role of professional education. Hopefully, as time passes, fundamental commonalities will begin to emerge.

When these commonalities have been sufficiently crystalized and identified, the task of refinement may begin. Somewhere along in this phase, the group will then address itself to the task of identifying general (student) objectives, with much the same process of talk and refinement. At some optimal point, certainly long before a final document is drafted, the committee will report its progress to the total faculty and staff. Time should then be allowed for the faculty and staff members to study and assimilate the ideas thus presented, after which they will meet as a total group until all disagreements have been resolved and all misunderstandings clarified. The committee will then redraft the document and present it to the faculty and staff a second time. By the third reading, the philosophy will probably be considered ready for adoption.

Such a procedure as just described is a good deal more thorough than is practiced in many schools, yet it contains the very minimal amount of involvement of the total staff that is necessary for any kind of understanding of the philosophy as the progenitor of school climate, policy and procedure. Total involvement of the school staff should really be total at every stage from the very beginning. To accomplish this, a different approach is needed as well as a genuine commitment to total involvement.

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Of course it is obvious that some sort of total involvement could be achieved merely by assembling the entire school staff on a regular basis. Discussion in a group this size is enormously difficult, however, and would assure that many persons would not contribute at all. A better plan seems to be that of dividing the entire philosophy writing group into groups of around fifteen in number. A typical subgroup might have seven or eight professional staff members (e.g. four classroom teachers, a counselor, an administrator and a consultant), a member of the custodial staff, a member of the clerical staff, a para-professional aide (if the school employs such people), a couple of community representatives and a couple of students. In a typical high school of 2,500 students, this would mean the formation of 25 or 30 subgroups.

In an arrangement such as this, the individual group leaders would assume a critical role. They would need to be persons of patience, fairness, and initiative. It would be well if they had some experience and expertise in small group techniques. It is no small task to conduct a group so that all who have something to say will say it, so that all will listen when someone speaks, so that all will weigh and judge and compromise and work toward the common goal of synthesizing a statement that is as

nearly as possible an equitable blending of the variety of principles and ideas that are represented.

The first task of each subgroup would be the same as the first task of any philosophy committee, to write a complete school philosophy at the first draft level. The deadline on this should be rather generous (perhaps one to three months) but should be firmly adhered to. The result of this first task, of course, would be as many philosophies as groups. The second task would be that of reducing the number by synthesizing those that have been written. One way of doing this would be to have all groups pair off and synthesize their own. For example, let groups A and B be two such groups that have paired off after the completion of the first stage. They would then work together, seeking all commonality of thought in their two philosophies, discussing differences of thought, and finally recomposing into a new philosophy that is a blend of the two original philosophies. This stage could also be accomplished by putting three, or even four, groups together at a time. This would somewhat accelerate the task of reducing all philosophies to a single one. The third task would be essentially the same, taking second stage philosophies and reducing to still a smaller number. After three or four such stages one philosophy, acceptable to all (within some definition of "acceptable"), would result. This would be the school philosophy. A model of this process might appear as in Figure 1, below.

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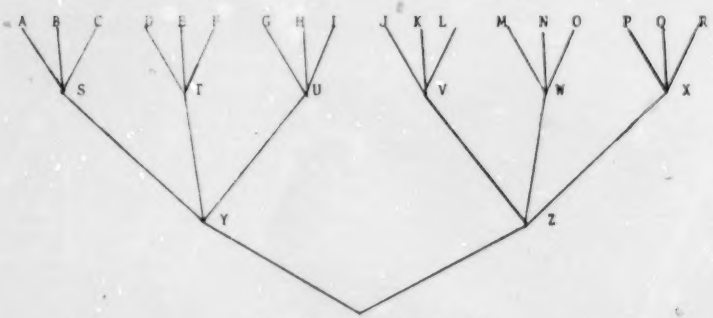

Figure 1. Model of philosophy writing by subgroup technique.

There is no point in denying that such an approach to philosophy writing is an enormous undertaking. The main point is that unless involvement of staff is very nearly total there is not much point in writing a philosophy at all. If, on the other hand, a faculty wrote a philosophy in this fashion they could throw away their final document and the most valuable aspect

of the philosophy would remain. Further, this method is much more efficient than it may first appear. Input is both total and equitable. No system of philosophy writing is more inefficient than one in which only a small number of persons do the work. The frustration or indifference of the other faculty members is ample testimony to the inefficiency of this approach.

Given sufficient time, it would probably not be a bad idea for school faculties to rewrite their philosophy each year. However, this would place too great a burden on the school staff. An alternative suggestion might be an annual review of the philosophy and a complete rewrite every four to seven years. What would constitute an adequate annual review? At least one meeting of subgroups as described above. If nothing else, such a meeting would at least yield assurance that new staff members had seen the philosophy and that old staff members had the opportunity to refresh their grasp of it. Meetings beyond that point would depend on whether or not one or more groups found some aspect that they felt should be updated. In all honesty, review of the philosophy should be an ongoing task. All staff members should be continually critical of both the validity and scope of the guidelines inferred by the philosophy. Only by such sensitivity to the direction of the school will school staff members have the awareness necessary to be genuinely responsive to student needs in a realistic way.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND FOLLOW-UP

What does one say that will summarize a document that is already a summary of what, by any definition, is an enormously complex task, that of writing a school philosophy? Most faculties are defeated at the very beginning of the process for any one or more of several reasons. The board or administration may not allow them to participate in the philosophy process at all. They may only be involved in reviewing the philosophy and/or voting on the final form. They may only be involved in part, with only a small committee actually doing the work. Even given the task in toto they may well not know what to do or how to go about doing it.

The Writing of the Philosophy

The school philosophy should consist of whatever the writers deem proper, in the light of what they want to say. Optimally, it would consist of at least two parts, the position statement and
30 the general objectives. The position statement should set the stage for the objectives that follow. It should be some sort of statement that captures the essence of the attitude of the writers toward the nature of man and the educative process. Properly written, the position statement can be both a bellwether and a benchmark. In the first case, it is the philosophical base out of which the general objectives grow and thus provides direction for goal development. In the second case, it becomes a reference norm for judging the changing climate of the times.

In the general objectives the philosophical stance of the position statement is translated into specific student outcomes. Very broad skills, attitudes or conditions of human phenomenology should be defined at this level. It is important that these goals be couched in terms of what students will be, or be able to do, rather than in terms of what the school will do for them. The latter does not fall within the category of objectives at all, in this sense.

In the actual writing effort it is vitally important that *all* of the members of the faculty and staff, as well as community and student representatives, be involved in the entire process. Such a group would be too large for productive discussion in the early stages; however, the entire task group should be divided up into committees of, say, fifteen in which all factions are propor-

tionally represented. Each of these subgroups should then write a complete preliminary draft of a philosophy and objectives. The small groups should then merge, two or three at a time, synthesize philosophies, and continue this process until all preliminary philosophies have been synthesized into one document.

The purpose of total faculty and staff involvement is twofold. If the philosophy of the school is to represent a genuine blend or synthesis of the thinking of all who must act under its direction, if it is to be a genuinely corporate philosophy, then the involvement must be total. Further, in-depth involvement in the development of such a document will foster, as a concomitant value, a degree of commitment on the part of the involved person that would probably not be attainable in any other way. This developed commitment may be the most valuable result of having a school philosophy.

The Task That Follows

Once a philosophy is complete and accepted, the task that follows is that of translation into program. This, too, is no easy task, especially in an existing school that already has a program. What is already happening often gets in the way of what ought to be. Nevertheless, the task, even though complex, can be attacked in a straight-forward manner.

The general objectives of the philosophy are, of necessity, broad and comprehensive. Interpretations of them may vary greatly among members of the faculty. To some extent, varied interpretation is of value and important. No educational program can be rich and varied if all teachers are operating within a curricular strait-jacket. However, most general objectives are sufficiently broad so that the problem is not so much a matter of interpretation as identification. Given the general objective, "The student will know his capabilities and interests," the question now is, what do we mean by "know his capabilities and interests?" Such a question suggests a set of smaller objectives, *subobjectives*, if you will, that are directly supportive of the main general objective. If the general objective is essentially cognitive, the subobjective writing task is that of identifying the several discrete skills and/or areas of knowledge that comprise the total thrust of this general objective. In essence, the set of subobjectives should serve to define the general objective in terms that are sufficiently discrete so that teachers can get a handle on them and use them as guides to experience building. Affective goals cannot always be analyzed in the same fashion as the cognitive goals. For example, the objective, "The student will sense the aesthetic quality in everyday situations," will very

likely defy any attempts to dissect it into discrete areas. A more profitable line of investigation is offered by the question: How does a person who possesses the characteristic in question look or act? Out of responses to such a question as this subobjectives could be developed. They would not necessarily identify discrete areas of the objective but, rather, might identify conditions and human attributes that, if practiced, might lead to the achievement of the general objective.

The act of writing *subject-matter objectives* is really a part of the entire process of translating objectives into school program. In this case it is the task of identifying specific subject oriented outcomes that are determined as being likely to foster the desired school level outcomes. The task itself really begins with a minute examination of the set of subobjectives to the general objectives. At this stage it is easier to see why the set of subobjectives was written at all. These objectives are sufficiently specific to give teachers genuine direction in the development of subject-matter objectives. The nature of the job is simply that of identifying areas of knowledge and skills, indigenous to the subject area. the mastery of which seems highly likely to nurture the achievement of school level objectives.

32 When the task of sifting through the entire set of supporting objectives to the general objectives is completed, the remainder of the job is simply to screen the entire list, eliminate duplications, and to organize the topics into pedagogical or motivational relationship clusters out of which might grow courses.

The identification of subject-matter objectives is part of the total task of translating school objectives into school program. An even broader and more pervasive part of this translation is the identification of classroom climate, teacher methodology and student experiences that will be likely to nurture the desired outcomes. Many of the desired student attributes and characteristics cannot be achieved by the inclusion of curricular content. Often the achievement of such outcomes will depend primarily on process, the totality of freedoms or restrictions, challenge or lack of it, threat or encouragement, deadlines or open time slots, the attitude of the teachers, and a host of other, often-overlooked factors.

In order to build the total climate and the philosophical-structural nature of the process orientation, the faculty must analyze the desired outcomes and make at least tentative decisions concerning the manner in which the educational process must be conducted in order for the outcomes to be achieved. For a goal such as, "The student will be capable of conducting

himself in a creative manner," the faculty members may find that they are talking about problems-oriented courses, teacher openness to a great deal of student fumbling and off-beat solutions, reduction of time deadlines as a curricular factor, the nurture of an attitude of open skepticism, and reduction of detail input (grill and drill) to an essential minimum.

Many such changes as these will require a genuine in-depth change in the attitude of the teachers, with a subsequent change in technique skills. An essential ingredient of this change is a realistic but deep commitment to the ends for which the change is necessary, a commitment that may only be developed by complete involvement in the total process of writing the philosophy and changing that philosophy into program. The commitment is more than half the battle but skills are needed. Many techniques to increase the self- and other-perceptiveness of the teachers are available. To mention a few, self-viewing on TV, interaction analysis coding of their classroom conduct by themselves or another person, simulated gaming situations, a variety of kinds of perception-increasing experiences such as certain kinds of encounter group sessions and individual or paired experiences, and in-service sessions utilizing outside consultants in which are addressed learning and achievement tasks.

When the teacher is in the classroom, the objectives of the school are on the line. In particular, the achievement of content oriented (especially cognitive and psychomotor) objectives will depend on the adequate outcome identification and planning of the teaching-unit. A unit might be defined as any cohesive, somewhat naturally bounded area of learning that is of interest to the teacher and the students. Highly structured teachers may do all content selection and planning themselves. Others may involve their students in both selection and planning. In whichever manner it is done it seems likely that *one* major thrust should be identified as the mainstream of the area of interest.

Once the main goal is defined, the direct supporting objectives can be developed. These are discrete, transitional outcomes that, together, constitute the anatomy of the main goal. They should serve to identify the set of skills, knowledges, or subconcepts that constitute the skill, knowledge or concept that is the main objective. Because of the nature of the topic there are generally other outcomes that will be achieved, outcomes whose achievement or lack of achievement will not affect the attainment of the main goal. These are concomitant objectives. They should be identified because the teachers', and students', knowledge of these peripheral (fringe benefit) outcomes will add depth and richness to the process. The development of means

for evaluating the achievement of the objectives should be addressed at the time that the outcomes are identified. If this is done it is usually more likely that the means of evaluation will be more natural and the competency level more realistic than if evaluative methods are chosen late in the process. It is extremely important that students be allowed to exhibit their understanding to their best advantage, and to express this understanding in a way most natural to them at whatever level they have it.

Concluding Remarks

There is no system, no pattern of operation, no set of principles that cannot be confounded and defeated by the humans involved, if they do not want it to work or if they do not care whether it works or not. Ultimately, the success of all attempts to improve education will depend on the commitment and good intent of the persons who are a part of the attempt. The approach to philosophy writing and curriculum development that is presented in this paper is no exception. The teachers and staff can be put through all the paces that have been suggested and still botch the job.

If there is any efficacy in the present approach that makes it stand out from other approaches, it is the factor of total staff involvement. No matter how unwilling a teacher or staff member is to become involved, if he is swept into the process and kept there until the very end it is extremely unlikely that he will come out untouched, and in a favorable way. It is that type of process. The in-depth give and take that is required will eventually lure him into the maelstrom in spite of himself. Once he has become emotionally and intellectually involved there is no hope that he will ever be quite the same again. Even if he is not in agreement with all that is done his very involvement will cause basic changes to take place in spite of himself, and he will carry many new attitudes into his classroom with him.

Is it trite to say there is no panacea? Too many educators (as professionals in some other fields) seem to get caught in the trap of searching for "the answer." There are no answers, as such. But there are increasingly sophisticated questions and the professional who pursues these questions with an honest heart and open mind may find that "the answer" is within himself as an evolving human being, capable of and willing to assist others to become evolving human beings as well.

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